

PM: I will apologise if I'm wrong

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says he will apologise to the people if he had inadvertently erred when he spoke about the Scomi Group during a recent TV3 interview.

Abdullah said he had been criticised by some people who said he had lied about Scomi. Abdullah's son Kamaluddin is a shareholder in the oil and gas services company.

"They told me that I had told a lie and they gave evidence of what Scomi has got," he told reporters after opening the Ampang Umno division meeting yesterday.

Abdullah said he wanted to get to the bottom of the matter and had asked Scomi to submit him a report.

"I have asked for information from Scomi itself. I want to know what it is all about. I will make an announcement about it later."

The Prime Minister said that if he had made mistakes regarding Scomi during the *Bersempa Bersama Perdana Menteri* interview aired by TV3 last month, he would willingly apologise.

"I have no problem with that. I did not deliberately lie."

During the TV interview, Abdullah denied that Kamaluddin and his son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin had benefited from his position as Prime Minister, including securing government projects.

Abdullah had said that Kamaluddin had to find projects overseas because he did

not want his business to be linked with his father.

In his speech to the Umno members, Abdullah said he did not know every aspect of Scomi because he was not managing his son's business.

"I never interfere with his business and I never ask him to report to me," he said, adding that if he had made an error in what he said about Scomi in the interview, it was not because he was lying to cover up anything.

"There is no good in lying just to save oneself," he said.

Abdullah urged party members to tell him if he had made mistakes and assured them that he was willing to accept criticism and consider advice.

"I want to make sure decisions are made collectively with my ministers and that what we decide is good for the country."

During the press conference, Abdullah also said he disagreed with a proposal by Majlis Amanah Rakyat or Mara to deduct money from the Employees Provident Fund of Mara loan defaulters.

He said EPF savings were for the contributor's old age and if this were allowed, they would lack money when they need it most.

"It is better for Mara to find other ways to resolve the problem of recovering loans such as restructuring them. Surely, there are other steps Mara can take," he added.

On the deployment of Malaysian peacekeepers to Lebanon, he said Malaysia's stand was that it would send its soldiers as soon as the United Nations give the go-ahead.